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MAO TSE-TUNG

TALKS AT THE YENAN FORUM ON ART AND LITERATURE

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MAO TSE-TUNG

TALKS AT THE YENAN FORUM ON ART AND LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

Comrades! You have been invited to this forum today to exchange views and ascertain the proper relationship between our work in the artistic and literary fields and our revolutionary work in general, to determine what is the proper path of development of revolutionary art and literature and how they can give better help to other revolutionary activities, so that we can overthrow the enemy of our nation and accomplish the task of national liberation.

In our struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people there are various fronts, of which two may be mentioned: the civilians' front and the soldiers' front, *i.e.* the cultural front and the military front. In order to defeat the enemy we must rely primarily on an army with guns in its soldiers' hands. But this is not enough; we also need a cultural army which is absolutely indispensable for uniting ourselves and defeating the enemy. Since the May 4 Movement of 1919 this cultural army has taken shape in China and has helped the Chinese revolution in gradually reducing the domain and weakening the influence of China's feudal culture and her comprador culture which is

adapted to imperialist aggression. By now the Chinese reactionaries can only propose what they call "quantity versus quality" as a means of opposing the new culture; in other words, the reactionaries who can afford to blow the expense are straining to turn out an immense quantity of stuff, though they are unable to produce anything good. On the cultural front, art and literature have formed an important and victorious sector since the May 4 Movement. The movement of revolutionary art and literature made much progress during the ten years' civil war. Although this movement and the revolutionary war headed in the same general direction, yet as the two brother armies participating in them were cut off from each other by the reactionaries, they lacked co-ordination in their practical activities. It is a very good thing that since the outbreak of the War of Resistance more and more revolutionary artists and writers have come to Yenan and other anti-Japanese base areas. But their arrival at these base areas is not the same as their complete merging with the people there. If the revolutionary work is to be pushed forward, a complete merging must be effected. The purpose of our meeting today is precisely to fit art and literature properly into the whole revolutionary machine as one of its component parts, to make them a powerful weapon for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and annihilating the enemy, and to help the people to fight the enemy with one heart and one mind. What are the problems to be solved in order to achieve

this objective? I think they are the problems of the standpoint, the attitude and the audience of the artists and writers and of how they should work and how they should study.

Standpoint: Our standpoint is that of the proletariat and the broad masses of the people. For members of the Communist Party this means that they must adopt the standpoint of the Party and adhere to Party spirit and Party policies. Are there any of our artists and writers who still lack a correct or clear understanding on this point? I think there are. Quite a number of our comrades have often departed from the correct standpoint.

Attitude: Our specific attitudes towards specific things arise from our standpoint. For example: Should we praise or should we expose? This is a question of attitude. Which of these two attitudes should we adopt? I should say both and it all depends on whom you are dealing with. There are three kinds of people: the enemy, the allies in the united front and our own people, namely, the masses and their vanguard. Three different attitudes must be adopted towards these three kinds of people. With regard to our enemies, *i.e.* the Japanese imperialists and all other enemies of the people, the task of revolutionary artists and writers is to expose their cruelty and chicanery, point out the tendency of their inevitable defeat and encourage the anti-Japanese army and people to fight them with one heart and one mind and overthrow them resolutely. In our attitude towards

our various allies in the united front, we ought to promote unity as well as criticism, and there should be different kinds of unity and different kinds of criticism. We support their resistance to Japan and commend them for their achievements. But we ought to criticise them if they do not put up an active resistance to Japan. We must resolutely combat anyone if he opposes communism and the people and moves farther down the path of reaction with every passing day. As to the masses of the people, their toil and struggle, their army and their party, we should of course praise them. The people also have their shortcomings. Many among the proletariat still retain petty-bourgeois ideas, while both the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie entertain backward ideas—these are the burdens handicapping them in their struggles. We should spend a long time and be patient in educating them and helping them to remove the burdens from their backs and to fight against their own shortcomings and errors so that they can take big strides forward. In the course of their struggles they have remoulded or are remoulding themselves, and our art and literature should depict this process of remoulding. We should not take a one-sided view and mistakenly ridicule them or even be hostile towards them unless they persist in their errors. What we produce should enable them to unite, to advance and to stride forward with one heart and one mind, discarding what is backward and promoting what is revolutionary; it certainly should not do the opposite.

Audience, *i.e.* for whom are the artistic and literary works produced? In the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia border region and the anti-Japanese base areas in North and Central China, the problem is different from that in the Kuomintang-controlled areas and particularly from that in Shanghai before the War of Resistance. In Shanghai at that time a section of the students, office workers and shop assistants formed the bulk of the audience for revolutionary art and literature. In the Kuomintang-controlled areas since the start of the War of Resistance, the scope has been widened to some extent, but basically these people remain the chief audience because the government there has kept the workers, peasants and soldiers away from revolutionary art and literature. In our base areas the situation is entirely different. Here the audience for art and literature is composed of workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary cadres. There are students too, but they are different from the students of the old type in that they are either ex-cadres or would-be cadres. Cadres of all kinds—soldiers in the army, workers in the factories and peasants in the villages—want to read books and newspapers if they are literate, and to see plays and pictures, sing songs and listen to music if they are not; they are the audience for our art and literature. Take the cadres only: they are not, as you imagine, small in number, but are actually much more numerous than the prospective readers of a new book published in the Kuomintang-controlled areas. There one edition

of a book usually runs to only about two thousand copies and three editions total only six thousand, while here in our base areas the cadres who can read number more than ten thousand in Yenan alone. Moreover, many of them are well-steeled revolutionaries who have come from all parts of the country and will go to different places to work; thus the education of these people is a task of great importance. Our artists and writers should do good work on their behalf.

Since the audience for our art and literature is made up of workers, peasants, soldiers and their cadres, the problem arises of how to understand these people and to know them well. A great deal of work has to be done in order to understand them and to know them well, to understand and to know well all kinds of things and people in the Party and government organisations, in the villages and factories and in the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. Our artists and writers should work in their own field, which is art and literature, but their duty first and foremost is to understand and know the people well. How did they stand in this regard in the past? I would say that they failed to know the people well and failed to understand them, and were like heroes with no scope for displaying their heroism. What did they fail to know well? They failed to know the people well. They did not know well either what they were describing or their audience; they were even perfect strangers to both. They did not know well the workers,

peasants, soldiers and their cadres. What did they fail to understand? They failed to understand language, *i.e.* they lacked an adequate knowledge of the rich and lively language of the masses of the people. Many artists and writers, withdrawing themselves from the people into a void, are of course unfamiliar with the people's language, and thus their works are not only written in a language without savour or sap but often contain awkward expressions of their own coinage which are opposed to popular usage. Many comrades love to talk about "transformation along the popular line," but what does that mean? It means that the ideas and feelings of our artists and writers should be fused with those of the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers. In order to do so one should conscientiously learn the language of the masses. If one finds much of the language of the masses unintelligible, how can one talk about artistic and literary creation? When I say heroes with no scope for displaying their heroism, I mean that the masses do not appreciate your high-sounding talk. The more you put on airs as veterans, as "heroes," and the harder you try to sell your wares, the more the people refuse to be impressed. If you want the masses to understand you and want to become one with them, you must be determined to undergo a long and even painful process of remoulding. In this connection I might mention the transformation of my own feelings. I began as a student and acquired at school the habits of a student; in the

presence of a crowd of students who could neither fetch nor carry for themselves, I used to feel it undignified to do any manual labour, such as shouldering my own luggage. At that time it seemed to me that the intellectuals were the only clean persons in the world, and the workers and peasants seemed rather dirty beside them. I could put on the clothes of other intellectuals because I thought they were clean, but I would not put on clothes belonging to a worker or peasant because I felt they were dirty. Having become a revolutionary I found myself in the same ranks as the workers, peasants and soldiers of the revolutionary army, and gradually I became familiar with them and they with me too. It was then and only then that a fundamental change occurred in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois feelings implanted in me by the bourgeois schools. I came to feel that it was those unremoulded intellectuals who were unclean as compared with the workers and peasants, while the workers and peasants are after all the cleanest persons, cleaner than both the bourgeois and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, even though their hands are soiled and their feet smeared with cow dung. This is what is meant by having one's feelings transformed, changed from those of one class into those of another. If our artists and writers from the intelligentsia want their works to be welcomed by the masses, they must transform and remould their thoughts and feelings. Without such transformation and remoulding they can

do nothing well and will be ill-adapted to any kind of work.

The last problem is that of study; I mean the study of Marxism-Leninism and of society. One who considers himself a Marxist revolutionary writer, especially a Communist writer, must have a knowledge of Marxism-Leninism. But some comrades still lack a grasp of the basic concepts of Marxism. For example, one of its basic concepts is that existence determines consciousness, *i.e.* the objective reality of the class struggle and national struggle determines our thoughts and feelings. Some of our comrades, however, reverse the proper order of things and maintain that everything ought to start from "love." Now as for "love," in a class society there can be only class love; but these comrades are seeking a love that transcends the classes, love in the abstract as well as freedom in the abstract, truth in the abstract, human nature in the abstract, etc. This shows that these comrades have been deeply influenced by the bourgeoisie. They must thoroughly liquidate this influence and study Marxism-Leninism with an open mind. True, artists and writers should learn to create artistic and literary works, but Marxism-Leninism is the science that all revolutionaries should study, and artists and writers cannot be exceptions. Artists and writers should study society; that is, study the various classes in society, their mutual relations and respective conditions and their physiognomy and psychology. Only when these things are clearly grasped will our

art and literature be rich in content and correct in orientation.

Today I raise these problems by way of preamble and hope you all will give your opinions on these and other related issues.

May 2, 1942

CONCLUSION

Comrades! We have met three times during this month. In the pursuit of truth, heated debates have taken place and scores of Party and non-Party comrades have spoken, laying bare the issues and making them concrete. I think this is very profitable to the whole artistic and literary movement.

In discussing any problem we should start from actual facts and not from definitions. We shall be following the wrong method if we first look up definitions of art and literature in the textbooks and then use them as criteria in determining the direction of the present artistic and literary movement or in judging the views and controversies that arise today. We are Marxists and Marxism teaches that in our approach to a problem we should start not from abstract definitions but from objective facts and, by analysing these facts, determine the way we shall go, our policies and methods. We should do the same in our present discussion of art and literature.

What are the facts at the present time? The facts are: the War of Resistance that China has been waging for five years; the world-wide anti-fascist war; the vacillation of China's big landlords and big bourgeoisie in waging the War of Resistance as well as their high-handed policy towards the people; the movement of revolutionary art and literature since May 4, 1919—its great contributions to the revolution in the last twenty-three years and its many shortcomings; the anti-Japanese democratic base areas of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, and the alignment there of large numbers of artists and writers with the two armies and with the workers and peasants; the difference in circumstances and tasks between the artists and writers in our base areas and those in the Kuomintang-controlled areas; and the controversies which have arisen over art and literature in Yenan and other anti-Japanese base areas. These are the undeniable actualities and we have to examine our problems in the light of them.

What then is the crux of our problems? I think our problems are basically those of working for the masses and of how to work for them. If these two problems are not solved, or solved inadequately, our artists and writers will be ill-adapted to their circumstances and unfit for their tasks, and will come up against a series of problems from within and without. My conclusion will centre round these two problems, while touching upon some other problems related to them.

I

The first problem is: For whom are our art and literature intended?

This problem has, as a matter of fact, been solved long ago by Marxists, and especially by Lenin. As far back as 1905 Lenin emphatically pointed out that our art and literature should "serve the millions upon millions of working people."[1] It might seem that this problem has been solved by our comrades working in art and literature in the anti-Japanese base areas and needs no further discussion. But actually this is not

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[1] *See* V. I. Lenin, *The Party's Organization and the Party's Literature*, in which the characteristics of proletarian literature are described as follows:

"This will be a free literature, because neither covetousness nor careerism but rather the idea of socialism and feelings for the working people will draw ever fresh forces into its ranks. This will be a free literature because it will serve neither those overfed mesdames nor the 'upper tens of thousands' who are bored with life and suffer from obesity, but it will serve millions and tens of millions of working people who constitute the pick of the nation, its strength and its future. This will be a free literature because it will fructify the highest achievement in the revolutionary thought of mankind with the experience and vigorous work of the socialist proletariat, creating a permanent inter-relationship between the experience of the past (scientific socialism, which completed the development of socialism from its primitive, utopian forms) and the experience of the present (the present day struggle of our worker-comrades)." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. X, pp. 30-31, Moscow, 1947.)

the case. Many comrades have by no means arrived at a clear-cut solution of this problem. Consequently their sentiments, their works, their actions and their ideas concerning the guiding principles of art and literature have been more or less at variance with the needs of the masses and the demands of actual struggles. Among the large number of men of culture, of artists, writers and workers in art and literature in general who, together with the Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, have participated in the great struggle for liberation, there may of course be some opportunists who will stay only a while, but the greatest majority are energetically working for the common cause. Thanks to the efforts of these comrades, the achievements in our literature, theatre, music and fine arts have been considerable. Many of these artists and writers have begun their work since the Anti-Japanese War, while others took up revolutionary work even long before the war, undergoing numerous hardships and influencing the broad masses of the people by their actions and their works. Why, then, should I say that even some of these comrades have not clearly solved the problem—for whom are art and literature intended? Is it possible that some of them still maintain that revolutionary art and literature are intended not for the broad masses of the people but for the exploiters and oppressors?

Quite true, there exist art and literature intended for the exploiters and oppressors. The art and litera-

ture for the landlord class are feudal art and literature. Such are the art and literature of the ruling classes of China's feudal epoch. Even today such art and literature still retain a considerable influence in China. The art and literature for the bourgeoisie are bourgeois art and literature. People like Liang Shih-ch'iu,[1] whom Lu Hsun severely criticised, may talk about art and literature as transcending the classes, but in fact they all uphold bourgeois art and literature and oppose proletarian art and literature. The art and literature for imperialism, as represented by Chou Tso-jen, Chang Tzu-p'ing[2] and their like, are called collaborationist art and literature. So far as we are concerned, art and literature are not intended for any of the above-mentioned persons, but for the people. We have said that China's new culture at the present stage is an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist culture of the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat. Everything that truly belongs to the broad masses of the people must now of necessity be under the leadership of the proletariat. Nothing under the leadership of the bourgeoisie can possibly belong to the broad masses of the people. Naturally the same applies to the new art and literature in the new cul-

[1] A member of the counter-revolutionary National Socialist Party, he has for years propagated the literary theories of the reactionary U.S. bourgeoisie, stubbornly opposed the revolution and denounced revolutionary literature.

[2] Both capitulated to the Japanese invaders upon their occupation of Peking and Shanghai in 1937.

ture. We should take over the rich legacy and succeed to the fine tradition of Chinese and foreign art and literature of the past, but we must do this with our eyes upon the broad masses of the people. We do not refuse to make use of the artistic and literary forms of the past, but in our hands these old forms, remoulded and filled with new content, also become things which are revolutionary and serve the people.

Who, then, are the broad masses of the people? The broadest masses of the people who constitute more than 90 per cent of the total population are the workers, peasants, soldiers and the urban petty bourgeoisie. So our art and literature are first of all for the workers who form the class which leads the revolution. Secondly, they are for the peasants who form the most numerous and steadfast allies in the revolution. Thirdly, they are for the armed workers and peasants, *i.e.* the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies and other people's armed forces, which are the main forces of the revolutionary war. Fourthly, they are for the working masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie together with its intelligentsia, who are also allies in the revolution and are capable of lasting co-operation with us. These four kinds of people form the overwhelming majority of the Chinese nation and consequently are the broadest masses of the people.

Our art and literature should be intended for the four kinds of people mentioned above. To serve these four kinds of people we must take the stand of the

proletariat instead of that of the petty bourgeoisie. It is impossible today for writers who persist in their individualist petty-bourgeois stand to serve faithfully the masses of revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers, because they are interested mainly in the small number of intellectuals of the petty bourgeoisie. Here is precisely the reason why some of our comrades are unable to solve correctly the problem of for whom are our art and literature intended. I am not referring to their theory. In theory or in words, none in our ranks would consider the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers less important than the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. I am speaking of their deeds and actions. In deed and action, do they regard the petty-bourgeois intellectuals as more important than the workers, peasants and soldiers? I think they do. Many comrades are concerned with studying the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, analysing their psychology, giving emphatic expression to their life and excusing or defending their shortcomings, rather than with leading these people, together with themselves, to get closer to the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, to participate in their actual struggles or to give expression to their life and educate them. Many comrades, because they are petty bourgeois in origin and intellectuals themselves, seek friends only in the ranks of the intellectuals and concentrate their attention on studying and describing them. This would be quite proper if they made such a study and description from a proletarian standpoint. But they do not

do so, or do not fully do so. They take the stand of the petty bourgeoisie and produce their works as a kind of self-expression of the petty bourgeoisie, as can be seen in quite a number of our artistic and literary works. Quite often they express heart-felt sympathy for the intellectuals of petty-bourgeois origin, they sympathise with or even praise their shortcomings. As to the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, they seldom come into contact with them, do not understand or study them, do not have bosom friends among them and are not adept at describing them and, when they do describe them, the result is merely petty-bourgeois intellectuals in the clothing of working people. In certain respects they also love the workers, peasants and soldiers and the cadres springing from them; but there are times when they do not love them, and there are some respects in which they do not love them—they do not appreciate their emotions, their manners, their budding art and literature (such as wall newspapers, murals, folk songs, folk tales, etc.). To be sure, sometimes they like these things too, but this is because of their novelty, for the sake of embellishing their own works, or even for the backward qualities embodied in them. At other times they openly despise these things and prefer what belongs to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals or even the bourgeoisie. These comrades still stand on the side of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, or, to put it more elegantly, their innermost soul is still a kingdom of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. Thus they have

not yet solved or unequivocally solved the problem, "For whom are art and literature intended?" And this refers not only to the newcomers to Yenan; even among those who have been to the front and worked for a few years in our base areas and in the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, many have not solved this problem thoroughly. To solve this problem thoroughly, a long time is required, say, eight or ten years. But no matter how long it takes, we must solve it, and solve it unequivocally and thoroughly. Our artists and writers must accomplish this task and shift their stand—gradually shift it over to the side of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, to the side of the proletariat, in the course of going into their midst and into the heart of the actual struggle and in the course of studying Marxism and society. Only thus can we have art and literature that are truly for the workers, peasants and soldiers, and that are truly proletarian.

The problem of "for whom" is a fundamental one, one of principle. Hitherto the disputes, divergences, antagonism and discord among some of our comrades have not arisen on this fundamental issue of principle but on secondary issues or even issues devoid of principles. On this question of principle the contending sides have shown little divergence but have in almost perfect agreement tended to some extent to look down on the workers, peasants and soldiers and isolate themselves from the masses. I say "to some extent" because, generally speaking, these comrades differ

from the Kuomintang in its disdain of the workers, peasants and soldiers and its isolation from the masses; but all the same the tendency is there. Unless this fundamental problem is solved, it will be difficult to solve many others. Take, for example, the sectarianism in artistic and literary circles which also involves a question of principle. It can be eradicated only by putting forward such slogans as "Serve the workers and peasants!" "Serve the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies!" and "Go into the midst of the masses!" and by thoroughly carrying them out; otherwise the problem of sectarianism can never be solved. Lu Hsun once said:

> "The necessary condition for the united front is a common aim.... The discord in our front shows that we are not agreed on the aim, some working only for small groups and others working in fact for themselves. If we all place our aim in the broad masses of workers and peasants, our front will of course be united."[1]

The same problem cropped up in Shanghai in Lu Hsun's time just as it now crops up in Chungking. In such places it is hard to solve the problem thoroughly, because the rulers there oppress the revolutionary artists and writers and deprive them of the freedom to go into the midst of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers. But here among us the situation is

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[1] *See* "My View on the Alliance of Left-Wing Writers," *Complete Works of Lu Hsun*, Chinese ed., Vol. IV.

entirely different. Here we encourage revolutionary artists and writers to get actively into contact with the workers, peasants and soldiers, and give them full freedom to go into their midst to create genuinely revolutionary art and literature. The problem with us here is therefore nearing solution. Yet to be nearing the solution is not the same as to arrive at a complete and thorough solution, and it is precisely for this complete and thorough solution that we must, as we have said above, study Marxism and society. By Marxism we mean the living Marxism that can have practical bearing on the life and struggle of the masses, and not Marxism in words. When Marxism in words is transformed into Marxism in practical life, there will be no more sectarianism. And not only will the problem of sectarianism be solved but many other problems as well.

II

The question of "whom to serve" having been solved, the question of "how to serve" comes up. To put it in the words of our comrades: Should we devote ourselves to elevation or to popularisation?

In the past some comrades rather or even very much despised and neglected popularisation and unduly stressed elevation. Elevation should be stressed, but it is wrong to stress it lopsidedly and solely and excessively. The afore-mentioned lack of clarity and

thoroughness in the solution of the problem of "for whom," also manifests itself in this connection. As they are not clear about the question, naturally they fail to find any proper criterion for what they mean by "elevation" and "popularisation," let alone the proper relation between the two. Since our art and literature are basically intended for the workers, peasants and soldiers, popularisation means extending art and literature among these people while elevation means raising their level of artistic and literary appreciation. What should we popularise among them? The stuff that is needed and can be readily accepted by the feudal landlord class? Or that which is needed and can be readily accepted by the bourgeoisie? Or that which is needed and can be readily accepted by the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia? No, none of these will do. We must popularise what is needed and can be readily accepted by the workers, peasants and soldiers themselves. Consequently the duty of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers precedes the task of educating them. This is even more true of elevation. There must be a basis to elevate from. When we lift up a bucket of water, for instance, aren't we lifting up something that lies on the ground and does not float in mid-air? What then is the basis from which the standard of our art and literature is to be raised? From the feudal basis? The bourgeois basis? The basis of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia? No. It can only be raised from the basis of the masses of the workers, peasants and soldiers. This

means not that we raise the workers, peasants and soldiers to the level of the feudal class, the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, but that we raise them up along their own line of advance, along the line of advance of the proletariat. Here again the task of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers comes in. Only by starting from the workers, peasants and soldiers can we have a correct understanding of elevation and popularisation and find the proper relation between the two.

What after all is the source of any kind of art and literature? An artistic or literary work is ideologically the product of the human brain reflecting the life of a given society. Revolutionary art and literature are the products of the brains of revolutionary artists and writers reflecting the life of the people. In the life of the people itself lies a mine of raw material for art and literature, namely, things in their natural state, things crude, but also most lively, rich and fundamental; in this sense, they throw all art and literature into the shade and provide for them a unique and inexhaustible source. This is the only source, for there can be no other source. Some may ask: Is there not another source in the books, in the artistic and literary works of ancient times and foreign countries? As a matter of fact, artistic and literary works of the past are not the source but the flow; they are the products which the ancients and the foreigners created out of the artistic and literary raw material they lit upon in the people's life of their own times

and places. We must take over all the fine artistic and literary legacy, critically assimilate from it whatever is beneficial to us and hold it up as an example when we try to work over the artistic and literary raw material derived from the people's life of our own time and place. It makes an enormous difference whether or not one has such examples to look up to, a difference which explains why some works are refined and others crude, some polished and others coarse, some superior and others inferior, some smoothly done and others laboriously executed. Therefore we must not refuse to take over the legacy from the ancients and the foreigners and learn from such examples, whether feudal or bourgeois. But succession to a legacy and learning from examples should never take the place of the creation of our own work, for nothing can take its place. In art and literature, the uncritical appropriation and imitation of the ancients and foreigners represent the most sterile and harmful artistic and literary doctrinairism. All revolutionary artists and writers of China, all artists and writers of high promise, must, for long periods of time, unreservedly and whole-heartedly go into the midst of the masses, the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers; they must go into fiery struggles, go to the only, the broadest, the richest source to observe, learn, study and analyse all men, all classes, all kinds of people, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle and all raw material of art and literature, before they can proceed to creation. Otherwise, for all your

labour, you will have nothing to work on and will become the kind of "empty-headed artists or writers" against whom Lu Hsun, in his testament, so earnestly cautioned his son.[1]

Though man's social life constitutes the only source for art and literature, and is incomparably more vivid and richer than art and literature as such, the people are not satisfied with the former alone and demand the latter. Why? Because, although both are beautiful, life as reflected in artistic and literary works can and ought to be on a higher level and of a greater power and better focused, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life. Revolutionary art and literature should create all kinds of characters on the basis of actual life and help the masses to push history forward. For example, on the one hand there are people suffering from hunger, cold and oppression and on the other hand there are men exploiting and oppressing men—a contrast that exists everywhere and seems quite commonplace to people; artists and writers, however, can create art and literature out of such daily occurrences by organising them, bringing them to a focal point and making the contradictions and struggles in them typical—create art and literature that can awaken and arouse the masses and impel them to unite and struggle to change their environment.

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[1] *See* "Death," *Complete Works of Lu Hsun,* Chinese ed., Vol. VI.

If there were no such art and literature, this task could not be fulfilled or at least not effectively and speedily fulfilled.

What are popularisation and elevation in art and literature? What is the relation between the two? Works of popularisation are simpler and plainer and therefore more readily accepted by the broad masses of the people of today. Works of a higher level are more polished and therefore more difficult to produce and less likely to win the ready acceptance of the broad masses of people of today. The problem facing the workers, peasants and soldiers today is this: engaged in a ruthless and sanguinary struggle against the enemy, they remain illiterate and uncultured as a result of the prolonged rule of the feudal and bourgeois classes and consequently they badly need a widespread campaign of enlightenment, and they eagerly wish to have culture, knowledge, art and literature which meet their immediate need and are readily acceptable to them so as to heighten their passion for struggle and their confidence in victory, to strengthen their solidarity, and thus to enable them to fight the enemy with one heart and one mind. In meeting their primary need, we are not to "add flowers to a piece of brocade" but "offer fuel to a person in snowy weather." Under the present conditions, therefore, popularisation is the more pressing task. It is wrong to despise and neglect this task.

But popularisation and elevation cannot be sharply separated. Not only is it possible to popularise even

now a number of works of a higher level, but the cultural level of the broad masses is also steadily rising. If popularisation remains always on the same level—for one, two or three months, for one, two or three years, dealing out always the same stuff like "Little Cowherd,"[1] or the characters of "man, hand, mouth, knife, cow, goat,"[2] then will not the educator and the educated remain much of a muchness? What is such popularisation good for? The people need popularisation, but along with it they need elevation too, elevation month by month and year by year. Popularisation is popularisation for the people, and elevation is elevation of the people. Such elevation does not take place in mid-air, nor behind closed doors, but on the basis of popularisation. It is at once determined by popularisation and gives direction to it. In China, the revolution and revolutionary culture are uneven in their development and they broaden out only gradually; thus in one place the work of popularisation may have been carried out, and also elevation on the basis of popularisation, while in other places the work of popularisation may not yet have begun. Therefore the helpful experiences of elevation on the basis of

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[1] A popular Chinese operetta with a cast of only two characters, a cowherd and a village girl, carrying on a dialogue in songs. With its songs reworded for the purpose of anti-Japanese propaganda, it enjoyed much popularity in the early days of the War of Resistance.

[2] In Chinese, these are characters of a few strokes, usually given in the first lessons of old primers.

popularisation in one place may be applied in another, so as to serve as guidance to the work of popularisation and elevation there and save a good deal of labour. Internationally, the helpful experiences of foreign countries, especially the experiences of the Soviet Union, can serve as our guide. Thus our elevation is on the basis of popularisation while our popularisation is under the guidance of elevation. This being the case, the work of popularisation in our sense not only constitutes no obstacle to elevation but affords a basis for our work of elevation on a limited scale at present, and prepares the necessary conditions for our far more extensive work of elevation in the future.

Besides the elevation that directly meets the need of the masses there is the elevation that meets their need indirectly, namely, the elevation needed by the cadres. Being advanced members of the masses, the cadres are generally better educated than the masses, and art and literature of a higher level are entirely necessary to them; and it would be a mistake to ignore this. Anything done for the cadres is also entirely done for the masses, because it is only through the cadres that we can give education and guidance to the masses. If we depart from this objective, if what we give to the cadres cannot help them to educate and guide the masses, then our work of elevation will be like aimless shooting, *i.e.* deviating from our fundamental principle of serving the broad masses of the people.

To sum up: through the creative labour of rev-

olutionary artists and writers the raw material of art and literature in the life of the people becomes art and literature in an ideological form in service of the masses of the people. Hence there are, on the one hand, the more advanced art and literature which are developed upon the basis of elementary art and literature and needed by the elevated section of the masses, or primarily by the cadres; and on the other hand, elementary art and literature which are produced under the guidance of the more advanced art and literature and often meet the urgent need of the broadest masses of today. Whether advanced or elementary, our art and literature are intended for the masses of the people, primarily for the workers, peasants and soldiers, created for them and to be used by them.

Since we have solved the problem of the relation between popularisation and elevation, the problem of the relation between experts and popularisers can also be settled. Our experts should serve not only the cadres but chiefly the masses. Our experts in literature should pay attention to the wall newspapers of the masses and the reportage literature in the army and the villages. Our experts in drama should pay attention to the small troupes in the army and the villages. Our experts in music should pay attention to the songs of the masses. Our experts in the fine arts should pay attention to the fine arts of the masses. All these comrades should keep in close touch with the popularisers of art and literature among the

masses, help and guide the popularisers as well as learn from them, and through them draw nourishment from the masses to develop and enrich themselves and to prevent their specialities from becoming empty, lifeless castles in the air detached from the masses and from reality. Experts should be respected; they are very valuable to our cause. But we should also remind them that no revolutionary artist or writer can produce any work of significance unless he has contact with the masses, gives expression to their thoughts and feelings, and becomes their loyal spokesman. Only by speaking for the masses can he educate them and only by becoming their pupil can he become their teacher. If he regards himself as the master of the masses or as an aristocrat who lords it over the "low people," then no matter how great his talent, he will not be needed by the people and his work will have no future.

Is this attitude of ours one of utilitarianism? Materialists are not opposed to utilitarianism in general, but to the utilitarianism of the feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes, to those hypocrites who attack utilitarianism in word but embrace the most selfish and shortsighted utilitarianism in deed. There is no transcendental utilitarianism in this world, and in a class society utilitarianism is either of this or of that particular class. Being proletarian, revolutionary utilitarians, we take as our point of departure the uniting of the present and future interests of the broadest masses who constitute over 90 per cent

of the population; therefore we are revolutionary utilitarians who envisage the interests of the broadest scope and the longest range, not narrow utilitarians who look after only what is partial and immediate. If, for instance, you reproach the masses for their utilitarianism, and yet for the benefit of an individual or a clique you insist upon placing on the market and advertising among the masses a certain work which wins the favour of only a few but proves useless or even harmful to most people, then you are not only insulting the masses but revealing your own lack of self-knowledge. A thing is good only when it brings real benefit to the masses of the people. Granted that your work is as good as "The Spring Snow"; but for the time being it caters only for a few, and the masses are still enjoying the "Pa Emigrants in the Poor Quarters";[1] if you simply denounce the masses instead of elevating them, you will get nowhere for all your denunciations. The problem now is how to unite "The Spring Snow" with the "Pa Emigrants in the Poor Quarters," to unite elevation with popularisation. If

[1] This and "The Spring Snow" were songs of the third century B.C. sung by people of Ch'u, one of the largest states in ancient China. They represented respectively music of a lower and a higher order. "Sung Yu's Answer to the King of Ch'u" told the story that, in the capital of the state when a singer sang "The Spring Snow," only a few dozens would join him in chorus, but when he sang the "Pa Emigrants in the Poor Quarters," thousands of people would take up the song.

the two are not united, then any artistic work of the highest quality produced by an expert will only have the smallest use and, if one calls that "lofty and pure," one is simply flattering oneself and the masses will not endorse one's opinion.

Having solved the problem concerning the fundamental principle of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and of the way to serve them, we have also solved such problems as whether to depict the bright or the dark side of life and how to achieve unity among our artists and writers. If this is the fundamental principle we all agree upon, then it must be adhered to by our artists and writers, our schools of art and literature, our artistic and literary publications and organisations, and all our artistic and literary activities. It is wrong to deviate from this principle, and anything at variance with it must be duly corrected.

III

Since our art and literature are intended for the broad masses of the people, we can proceed to discuss a problem of inner-Party relations, *i.e.* the relation between the Party's artistic and literary activity and the Party's activity as a whole, and a problem of the Party's external relations, *i.e.* the relation between Party artistic and literary activity and non-Party artistic and literary activity—the problem of the united front in art and literature.

Let us take up the first problem. In the world today all culture, all art and literature belong to definite classes and follow definite political lines. There is in reality no such thing as art for art's sake, art which stands above classes or art which runs parallel to or remains independent of politics. Proletarian art and literature are part of the entire cause of the proletarian revolution, in the words of Lenin, "cogs and screws in the whole machine."[1] Therefore the Party's artistic and literary activity occupies a definite and assigned position in the Party's total revolutionary work and is subordinated to the prescribed revolutionary task of the Party in a given revolutionary period. Any opposition to this assignment will certainly lead to dualism or pluralism, and in essence amounts to Trotsky's formula: "politics—Marxist; art—bourgeois." We are not in favour of erroneously overemphasising the importance of art and literature, but neither are we in favour of underestimating it. Art and literature are subordinate to politics, but they in turn also exert a great influence on politics. Revolutionary art and literature are part of the entire cause of the revolution, they are its cogs and screws; though in com-

[1] *See* V. I. Lenin, *The Party's Organisation and the Party's Literature*, in which he says: "The cause of literature should form a *part* of the entire cause of the proletariat and become one of the 'cogs and screws' in the great united, social-democratic machine operated by the whole awakened vanguard of the working class." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. X, p. 27, Moscow, 1947.)

parison with certain other parts they may be less important and less urgent and occupy only a secondary position, yet they are, as cogs and screws, indispensable to the whole machine, and form an indispensable part of the entire cause of the revolution. If we had no art and literature even in the broadest and most general sense, then the revolutionary movement could not be carried on to victory. It would be wrong not to realise this. Furthermore, in saying that art and literature are subordinate to politics, we mean here class politics and mass politics, not the politics of a few so-called statesmen. Politics, whether revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, represents the struggle of one class against another, not the activity of a few individuals. Revolutionary struggles on the ideological and artistic fronts must be subordinate to the political struggle because only through politics can the needs of the class and the masses be expressed in concentrated form. The revolutionary statesmen or political experts who have mastered the science or art of revolutionary politics are merely leaders of millions of statesmen, namely, the masses, with the task of collecting the ideas of these mass-statesmen, submitting these ideas to a refining process and then passing the refined products back to the masses for them to accept and put into practice; they are therefore not the kind of aristocratic "statesmen" who draw up plans all by themselves with the conceit that they have a monopoly of wisdom—herein lies the difference in principle between the statesmen of the proletariat and

those of the decadent bourgeoisie. It is precisely for this reason that the political character of our art and literature becomes entirely at one with its truthfulness. It would be wrong to fail to recognise this point and vulgarise the politics and statesmanship of the proletariat.

Let us take up next the question of the united front in art and literature. Since art and literature are subordinate to politics and since China's first and foremost political problem today is resistance to Japan, Party artists and writers must first of all unite on this issue with all non-Party artists and writers (from Party sympathisers, petty-bourgeois artists and writers to all bourgeois and landlord-class artists and writers who are in favour of resisting Japan). We should also unite with them on the issue of democracy; on this issue, however, not all the anti-Japanese artists and writers agree, so the range of unity will be more limited. Then again, we must unite with them on the special issue in artistic and literary circles—that of method and style in art and literature, but as we are for socialist realism and a section of artists and writers is against it, the range of unity may be further limited. Unity can be achieved on one issue while struggle and criticism take place on another. All the issues are at once separate and connected; thus on the issues which call for unity, such as resistance to Japan, there are at the same time struggle and criticism. In a united front, all unity and no struggle on the one hand, and all struggle and no unity on the

other—to put into practice, as some of our comrades did in the past, Right capitulationism, tailism, or "Left" exclusivism and sectarianism—are both wrong policies. This applies to politics as well as to art.

Petty-bourgeois artists and writers in China constitute an important force in the united front of art and literature. Although there are many shortcomings in their ideology and in their works, they are comparatively inclined towards the revolution and comparatively close to the working people. Therefore it is an especially important task to help them to overcome their shortcomings and win them over to the front of serving the working people.

IV

One of the principal methods of struggle in the artistic and literary sphere is art and literary criticism. It should be developed and, as many comrades have rightly pointed out, our work in this respect was quite inadequate in the past. Art and literary criticism presents a complex problem which requires much study of a special kind. Here I shall stress only the basic problem of criteria in criticism. I shall also comment briefly on certain other problems and incorrect views brought up by some comrades.

There are two criteria in art and literary criticism: political and artistic. According to the political criterion, all works are good that facilitate unity and resist-

ance to Japan, that encourage the masses to be of one heart and one mind and that oppose retrogression and promote progress; on the other hand, all works are bad that undermine unity and resistance to Japan, that sow dissension and discord among the masses and that oppose progress and drag the people back. And how can we tell the good from the bad here—by the motive (subjective intention) or by the effect (social practice)? Idealists stress motive and ignore effect, while mechanical materialists stress effect and ignore motive; in contradistinction from either, we dialectical materialists insist on the unity of motive and effect. The motive of serving the masses is inseparable from the effect of winning their approval, and we must unite the two. The motive of serving the individual or a small clique is not good, nor is the motive of serving the masses good if it does not lead to a result that is welcomed by the masses and confers benefit on them. In examining the subjective intention of an artist, *i.e.* whether his motive is correct and good, we do not look at his declaration but at the effect his activities (mainly his works) produce on society and the masses. Social practice and its effect are the criteria for examining the subjective intention or the motive. We reject sectarianism in our art and literary criticism and, under the general principle of unity and resistance to Japan, we must tolerate all artistic and literary works expressing every kind of political attitude. But at the same time we must firmly uphold our principles in our criticism, and ad-

here to our standpoint and severely criticise and repudiate all artistic and literary works containing views against the nation, the sciences, the people and communism, because such works, in motive as well as in effect, are detrimental to unity and the resistance to Japan. According to the artistic criterion, all works are good or comparatively good that are relatively high in artistic quality; and bad or comparatively bad that are relatively low in artistic quality. Of course, this distinction also depends on social effect. As there is hardly an artist who does not consider his own work excellent, our criticism ought to permit the free competition of all varieties of artistic works; but it is entirely necessary for us to pass correct judgments on them according to the criteria of the science of art, so that we can gradually raise the art of a lower level to a higher level, and to change the art which does not meet the requirements of the struggle of the broad masses into art that does meet them.

There is thus the political criterion as well as the artistic criterion. How are the two related? Politics is not the equivalent of art, nor is a general world outlook equivalent to the method of artistic creation and criticism. We believe there is neither an abstract and absolutely unchangeable political criterion, nor an abstract and absolutely unchangeable artistic criterion, for every class in a class society has its own political and artistic criteria. But all classes in all class societies place the political criterion first and the artistic criterion second. The bourgeoisie always rejects

proletarian artistic and literary works, no matter how great their artistic achievement. As for the proletariat, they must treat the art and literature of the past according to their attitude towards the people and whether they are progressive in the light of history. Some things which are basically reactionary from the political point of view may yet be artistically good. But the more artistic such a work may be, the greater harm will it do to the people, and the more reason for us to reject it. The contradiction between reactionary political content and artistic form is a common characteristic of the art and literature of all exploiting classes in their decline. What we demand is unity of politics and art, of content and form, and of the revolutionary political content and the highest possible degree of perfection in artistic form. Works of art, however politically progressive, are powerless if they lack artistic quality. Therefore we are equally opposed to works with wrong political approaches and to the tendency towards so-called "poster and slogan style" which is correct only in political approach but lacks artistic power. We must carry on a two-front struggle in art and literature.

Both tendencies can be found in the ideologies of many of our comrades. Those comrades who tend to neglect artistic quality should pay attention to its improvement. But as I see it, the political side is more of a problem at present. Some comrades lack elementary political knowledge and consequently all kinds of

muddled ideas arise. Let me give a few instances found in Yenan.

"The theory of human nature." Is there such a thing as human nature? Of course there is. But there is only human nature in the concrete, no human nature in the abstract. In a class society there is only human nature that bears the stamp of a class, but no human nature transcending classes. We uphold the human nature of the proletariat and of the great masses of the people, while the landlord and bourgeois classes uphold the nature of their own classes as if—though they do not say so outright—it were the only kind of human nature. The human nature boosted by certain petty-bourgeois intellectuals is also divorced from or opposed to that of the great masses of the people; what they call human nature is in substance nothing but bourgeois individualism, and consequently in their eyes proletarian human nature is contrary to their human nature. This is the "theory of human nature" advocated by some people in Yenan as the so-called basis of their theory of art and literature, which is utterly mistaken.

"The fundamental point of departure for art and literature is love, the love of mankind." Now love may serve as a point of departure, but there is still a more basic one. Love is a concept, a product of objective practice. Fundamentally, we do not start from a concept but from objective practice. Our artists and writers who come from the intelligentsia love the proletariat because social life has made them feel

that they share the same fate with the proletariat. We hate Japanese imperialism because the Japanese imperialists oppress us. There is no love or hatred in the world that has not its cause. As to the so-called "love of mankind," there has been no such all-embracing love since humanity was divided into classes. All the ruling classes in the past liked to advocate it, and many so-called sages and wise men also did the same, but nobody has ever really practised it, for it is impracticable in a class society. Genuine love of mankind will be born only when class distinctions have been eliminated throughout the world. The classes have caused the division of society into many opposites and as soon as they are eliminated there will be love of all mankind, but not now. We cannot love our enemies, we cannot love social evils, and our aim is to exterminate them. How can our artists and writers fail to understand such a common sense matter?

"Art and literature have always described the bright as well as the dark side of things impartially, on a fifty-fifty basis." This statement contains a number of muddled ideas. Art and literature have not always done so. Many petty-bourgeois writers have never found the bright side and their works are devoted to exposing the dark side, the so-called "literature of exposure"; there are even works which specialise in propagating pessimism and misanthropy. On the other hand, Soviet literature during the period of socialist reconstruction portrays mainly the bright side. It also describes shortcomings in work and vil-

lainous characters, but such descriptions serve only to bring out the brightness of the whole picture, and not on a "compensating basis." Bourgeois writers of reactionary periods portray the revolutionary masses as ruffians and describe the bourgeois as saints, thus reversing the so-called bright and dark sides. Only truly revolutionary artists and writers can correctly solve the problem whether to praise or to expose. All dark forces which endanger the masses of the people must be exposed while all revolutionary struggles of the masses must be praised—this is the basic task of all revolutionary artists and writers.

"The task of art and literature has always been to expose." This sort of argument, like the one mentioned above, arises from the lack of knowledge of the science of history. We have already shown that the task of art and literature does not consist solely in exposure. For the revolutionary artists and writers the objects to be exposed can never be the masses of the people, but only the aggressors, exploiters and oppressors and their evil aftermath brought to the people. The people have their shortcomings too, but these are to be overcome by means of criticism and self-criticism within the ranks of the people themselves, and to carry on such criticism and self-criticism is also one of the most important tasks of art and literature. However, we should not call that "exposing the people." As for the people, our problem is basically one of how to educate them and raise their level. Only counter-revolutionary artists and writers describe the people

as "born fools" and the revolutionary masses as "tyrannical mobs."

"This is still a period of the essay, and the style should still be that of Lu Hsun." Living under the rule of the dark forces, deprived of freedom of speech, Lu Hsun had to fight by means of burning satire and freezing irony cast in essay form, and in this he was entirely correct. We too must hold up to sharp ridicule the fascists, the Chinese reactionaries and everything endangering the people; but in our border region of Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia and the anti-Japanese base areas in the enemy's rear, where revolutionary artists and writers are given full freedom and democracy and only counter-revolutionaries are deprived of them, essays must not be written simply in the same style as Lu Hsun's. Here we can shout at the top of our voice, and need not resort to obscure and veiled expressions which would tax the understanding of the broad masses of the people. In dealing with the people themselves and not the enemies of the people, Lu Hsun even in his "essay period" did not mock or attack the revolutionary masses and the revolutionary parties, and his style was also entirely different from that employed in his essays on the enemy. We have already said that we must criticise the shortcomings of the people, but be sure that we criticise from the standpoint of the people and out of a whole-hearted eagerness to defend and educate them. If we treat our comrades like enemies, then we are taking the standpoint of the enemy. Are we then to give up satire alto-

gether? No. Satire is always necessary. But there are all kinds of satire; the kind for our enemies, the kind for our allies and the kind for our own ranks—each of them assumes a different attitude. We are not opposed to satire as a whole, but we must not abuse it.

"I am not given to praise and eulogy; works which extol the bright side of things are not necessarily great, nor are works which depict the dark side necessarily poor." If you are a bourgeois artist or writer, you will extol not the proletariat but the bourgeoisie, and if you are a proletarian artist or writer, you will extol not the bourgeoisie but the proletariat and the working people: you must do one or the other. Those works which extol the bright side of the bourgeoisie are not necessarily great while those which depict its dark side are not necessarily poor, and those works which extol the bright side of the proletariat are not necessarily poor, while those works which depict the so-called "dark side" of the proletariat are certainly poor—are these not facts recorded in the history of art and literature? Why should we not extol the people, the creator of the history of the human world? Why should we not extol the proletariat, the Communist Party, the New Democracy and socialism? Of course, there are persons who have no enthusiasm for the people's cause and stand aloof, looking with cold indifference on the struggle and the victory of the proletariat and its vanguard; and they only take pleasure in singing endless praises of themselves, plus perhaps

a few persons in their own coterie. Such petty-bourgeois individualists are naturally unwilling to praise the meritorious deeds of the revolutionary masses or to heighten their courage in struggle and confidence in victory. Such people are the black sheep in the revolutionary ranks and the revolutionary masses have indeed no use for such "singers."

"It is not a matter of standpoint; the standpoint is correct, the intention good, and the ideas are all right, but the expression is faulty and produces a bad effect." I have already spoken about the dialectical materialist view of motive and effect, and now I want to ask: Is the question of effect not one of standpoint? A person who, in doing a job, minds only the motive and pays no regard to the effect, is very much like a doctor who hands out prescriptions and does not care how many patients may die of them. Suppose, again, a political party keeps on making pronouncements while paying not the least attention to carrying them out. We may well ask, is such a standpoint correct? Are such intentions good? Of course, a person is liable to mistakes in estimating the result of an action before it is taken; but are his intentions really good if he adheres to the same old rut even when facts prove that it leads to bad results? In judging a party or a doctor, we must look at the practice and the effect, and the same applies in judging an artist or a writer. One who has a truly good intention must take the effect into consideration by summing up experiences and studying methods or, in the case of creative work, the

means of expression. One who has a truly good intention must criticise with the utmost candour one's own shortcomings and mistakes in work, and make up one's mind to correct them. That is why the Communists have adopted the method of self-criticism. Only such a standpoint is the correct one. At the same time it is only through such a process of practice carried out conscientiously and responsibly that we can gradually understand what the correct point of view is and have a firm grasp of it. If we refuse to do this in practice, then we are really ignorant of the correct point of view, despite our conceited assertion to the contrary.

"To call on us to study Marxism may again lead us to take the repetition of dialectical materialist formulas for literary creation, and this will stifle our creative impulse." We study Marxism in order to apply the dialectical materialist and historical materialist viewpoint in our observation of the world, society and art and literature, and not in order to write philosophical discourses in our works of art and literature. Marxism embraces realism in artistic and literary creation but cannot replace it, just as it embraces atomics and electronics in physics but cannot replace them. Empty, cut-and-dried dogmas and formulas will certainly destroy our creative impulse; moreover, they first of all destroy Marxism. Dogmatic "Marxism" is not Marxist but anti-Marxist. But will Marxism not destroy any creative impulse? It will; it will certainly destroy the creative impulse that is

feudal, bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, liberal, individualistic, nihilistic, art-for-art's-sake, aristocratic, decadent or pessimistic, and any creative impulse that is not of the people and of the proletariat. As far as the artists and writers of the proletariat are concerned, ought not these kinds of impulse to be done away with? I think they ought; they should be utterly destroyed, and while they are being destroyed, new things can be built up.

V

What does the existence of the above-mentioned problems in Yenan artistic and literary circles signify? It signifies the fact that in artistic and literary circles there still remain incorrect styles in work to a serious extent, that among our comrades there still remain such defects as idealism, doctrinairism, utopianism, empty talk, contempt of practice and aloofness from the masses, and that we need a thorough-going and serious campaign for their rectification.

Many of our comrades are still not very clear about the difference between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. Many Party members have joined the Party only organisationally while ideologically they have not yet joined it entirely, or have not joined it at all. Those who have not ideologically joined the Party still carry about in their heads many filthy things of the exploiting classes and have not the slight-

est idea what proletarian ideology, or communism, or the Party is. They say to themselves: "Proletarian ideology! Isn't it just the usual stuff?" They have no idea that to acquire this stuff is by no means easy; some people, for instance, have never in their lives had the slightest trace of a Communist about them, and cannot but end up by leaving the Party. Therefore, though the greater part of our Party members and our ranks are clean and honest, we must nevertheless make a conscientious overhauling organisationally and ideologically, so that we can lead the revolution to greater development and earlier victory. But organisational overhauling presupposes ideological overhauling, and we have to combat non-proletarian ideology with proletarian ideology. In artistic and literary circles in Yenan an ideological struggle has already begun, which is entirely necessary. Those intellectuals who are of the petty-bourgeois origin always, through various ways and means, including artistic and literary means, stubbornly try to express themselves, spread their own opinions, and demand that people remould the Party and the world in their image. In these circumstances it is our duty to shout to them: Comrades! Your stuff won't do! The proletariat cannot compromise with you; to yield to you is to yield to the big bourgeoisie and the big landlord class and to run the risk of destroying our Party and our country. Then whom should we take as the model? We can only remould the Party and the world in the image of the vanguard of the proletariat. We hope our comrades

in artistic and literary circles will realise the seriousness of this great controversy and actively join in this struggle, so that every comrade will become sound and healthy and our entire ranks truly united and consolidated ideologically and organisationally.

As a result of ideological confusions, many comrades have failed to distinguish clearly between our revolutionary base areas and Kuomintang-controlled areas and have consequently made many mistakes. A number of comrades have come from the garrets of Shanghai[1] and, in coming from the garrets to the revolutionary base areas, they have passed not only from one region to another but also from one historical epoch to another. The former belong to semi-feudal, semi-colonial society under the rule of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie, while the latter are a revolutionary society of New Democracy under the leadership of the proletariat. Arriving at our bases means coming under a régime of the broad masses of the people, a régime unprecedented in the thousands of years of Chinese history. Here we find an entirely different set of people around us and a different audience for our propaganda. The past epoch is gone and gone for ever. We must therefore unite unhesitatingly with the new masses. If among the new masses you comrades find that, as I said before, you "failed to

[1] In Shanghai in those days, the impecunious artists, writers, intellectuals, and small office employees mostly lived in such narrow, dark rooms for the sake of the low rent.

know them well, and failed to understand them, and were like heroes with no scope for displaying their heroism," then you will meet with difficulties not only when you go to the villages but right here in Yenan. Some comrades think that they would rather go on writing for the readers in the "big rear,"[1] as they know the conditions there well and can thus produce works "of national significance." This way of thinking is entirely wrong. The "big rear" is also changing; the readers there expect authors in the revolutionary base areas to tell them about the new people and a new world, and not to bore them with the same old stories. Therefore the more a work is intended for the masses of the revolutionary bases, the more national significance will it have. A. Fadeyev's *The Nineteen*[2] only depicts a small guerrilla unit and does not cater for the tastes of the readers of the old world; yet it has produced a world-wide effect, at least, as all of you here know, a tremendous effect in China.

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[1] Referring to the Kuomintang-controlled areas. During the Anti-Japanese War, people used to call the vast areas in South-west and North-west China, which were free from Japanese occupation and were under the Kuomintang control, the "big rear," as distinguished from the "small rear"—the anti-Japanese base areas in the enemy rear under Communist leadership.

[2] In this novel, published in 1927, the famous Soviet writer describes how in Siberia a guerrilla unit composed of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals fought the gangs of the counter-revolutionaries. It was translated into Chinese by Lu Hsun.

China is going forward, not backward, and what leads her forward is the revolutionary base areas, not any backward, retrogressive region. This is the fundamental fact that comrades must first of all clearly recognise in the course of the campaign to rectify the style in work.

Since we must adapt ourselves to the new epoch of the masses, we must thoroughly solve the question of the relationship between the individual and the masses. Lu Hsun's couplet should be our motto: "With frowning brows I coldly defy the thousands pointing their accusing fingers at me; with bowed head I meekly submit as an ox for the child to ride on."[1] The "thousands" here refer to the enemy, and we will never succumb to him no matter how fierce he may be. The "child" here refers to the proletariat and the broad masses of the people. All Communists, revolutionaries, revolutionary artists and writers, should follow the example of Lu Hsun and be the "ox" for the proletariat and the broad masses of the people, bending their shoulders to the task unto death. The intellectuals must go through a process of getting acquainted with the masses before they can unite with them and work for them. Although this process can be and is bound to be fraught with suffering and conflict, once you have made up your mind you will be equal to the task.

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[1] *See* "In Mockery of Myself," *Complete Works of Lu Hsun,* Chinese ed., Vol. VII.

What I have talked about today covers only some of the fundamental problems of the direction of our movement of art and literature, and many other specific problems await further study. I believe that you comrades are determined to go in this direction. I believe that, in the course of the campaign to rectify the style in work and in the long period of study and work in future, you will be able to remould yourselves and change the character of your work, to create many excellent works which will be well received by the broad masses of the people, and to push forward the movement of art and literature of our revolutionary base areas and of the whole country to a glorious new stage.

May 23, 1942

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